

Message

From: Ex. 6 Personal Privacy (PP)
Sent: 12/7/2015 2:06:27 PM
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Subject: Kewaunee County needs EPA protection

<http://www.greenbaypressgazette.com/story/opinion/columnists/2015/12/05/kewaunee-co-needs-epa-protection/76746088/>

Kewaunee Co. needs EPA protection

Nancy Utesch, For Press-Gazette Media 9:37 p.m. CST December 5, 2015

Ex. 6 Personal Privacy (PP)

In October, 16 residents from across Wisconsin, with legal and technical support from the Midwest Environmental Advocates law center, filed a petition for corrective action with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency requesting action by both state and federal agencies to address deficiencies in the water pollution permit program that allow for continued violations to the Clean Water Act.

The petition asks the EPA to bring Wisconsin back into compliance with the Clean Water Act or remove the state's delegated authority to administer the program.

As one of the petitioners, I requested help from the EPA out of necessity. Our community needs the presence of the EPA, and the aid and resources that can be provided by our federal government in addressing the ongoing water quality issues and contamination that plague Kewaunee County.



PRESS GAZETTE MEDIA

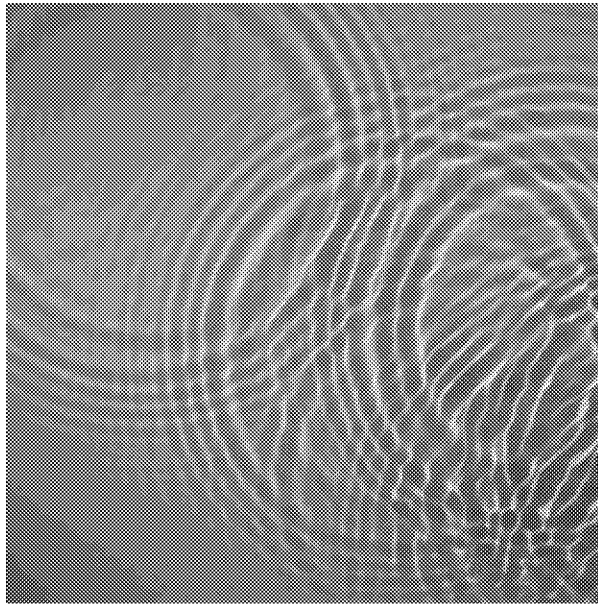
Petition to EPA: DNR failing on water quality

In 2014, Judge Jeffrey Boldt stated that “the proliferation of contaminated wells represents a massive regulatory failure to protect groundwater in the town of Lincoln,” Kewaunee County. He further described the area as “deplorable,” the “condition of the area’s groundwater a crisis.” Currently, the town of Lincoln has over 40 percent of its wells tested contaminated with E. coli, high nitrates, or both.

Mark Borchardt, U.S. Department of Agriculture researcher, described water samples taken from wells in Lincoln as what he would expect to find “in a third world country.”

Yet the state Department of Natural Resources did not accept full responsibility for the regulatory failure occurring in Lincoln, and most recently Secretary Cathy Stepp has made the statement that the department is aware of “some water quality challenges in Northeast Wisconsin.”

The DNR continues to marginalize the health and water crisis of our community, has not provided water to those in need, and most recently has responded to the demands made by Judge Boldt, that the safeguards and provisions called for stemming from the Kinnard Farms permit challenge, could not be fulfilled by the DNR, due to lack of power within the agency, and state statutes. Those standards included onsite monitoring of spreading fields in vulnerable karst areas, and reasonable animal unit caps.



PRESS GAZETTE MEDIA

Kewaunee County starts scientific well study

Instead of protecting the water and citizenry of Kewaunee county, great efforts have instead been placed on streamlining more CAFO permits and expansions into our already “full” county.

The continuation of permitting that displaces families from their homes, poisons them, and continues the threats of ruination of their lives and health is clearly beyond irresponsible. This is a complete and total travesty — not only here in Kewaunee, but to the entire state of Wisconsin, its proud agricultural heritage, and to citizens' basic fundamental human rights, found in our Constitution and the Public Trust Doctrine. The moral and ethical responsibilities the DNR has to the public's health and safety have been severely and grossly violated.

The DNR must recognize that it is in its final days of its continued negligence to the rural citizenry that must live with the agency's failed permitting process and resulting failing enforcement and compliance regimes, leaving citizenry repetitively exposed to the hazards of bad management practices that have the ability to ruin real people's water, homes, health and futures.

The DNR's inability to fulfill its responsibilities to the citizenry and the environment in Kewaunee County has left our county, water and its residents a community in crisis, left vulnerable to the pollution and poisoning of practices that harm.

Kewaunee County, its water and its people can no longer wait in the hopes of this agency addressing our needs. While recognizing the important role government must play in protecting water and people, the current state of the DNR, and the continued gutting of this agency by this administration, will not serve and protect the people of this state, or the environment — the job the DNR was enacted as a regulatory agency to fulfill.

As a community in a full-blown health and water emergency, residents in Northeastern Wisconsin will no longer tolerate an agency whose inabilities have become a threat to our well-being. It is time for the Environmental Protection Agency to give our community what it so desperately needs — protection.

Nancy Utesch lives in rural Kewaunee County and is a member of the environmental group Kewaunee CARES.